

Genesis 28:10–22

The God Who Meets Us in Christ and Is with Us in Christ

Introduction

The difference between what we see and the bigger, more important reality we cannot see (only comforting if we can see it through faith in Jesus!).

1. God reveals Himself to us in Jesus
 - a. Other than the appearance to Isaac at the beginning of the famine, this is the first word that we actually know of from Yahweh since before Jacob was born.
 - b. Coming against the backdrop of what we have seen from this family, the very fact that God is speaking to Jacob is an amazing grace. It can only be because of God's own commitment in Himself. Humanly speaking, this has expressed itself in a commitment to his fathers across generations (cf. v13).
 - c. What is revealed is that God has been continually operating in this grace (n.b. "ascending" first in v12)
 - d. Jesus identifies Himself with the ladder (cf. John 1:50–51). It is in Jesus, especially, that God reveals Himself to us (cf. Heb 1:1–3, Jn 5:39, Luk 24:25–27, Jn 14:6–9, 2Cor 4:3–6).
2. God is with us in Jesus
 - a. God is still with Isaac, and gloriously with Abraham (v13)
 - b. Jacob had never been in a place that seemed so foreign, but it ultimately belonged to him (v13b). Everything is God's. Everything is Christ's (Ps 2). Everything belongs to those who are in Christ. (cf. 1Cor 3:21–23)
 - c. Jacob was rightly terrified (implies that he would not even have slept there), but fails to be rightly encouraged (weighing God's actions as more important than his own and responding with repentance and faith). In truth, much of the Christian life is being appropriately impressed by the great holiness and glory of God—while being that much more impressed by the fact that He is gracious to us, and having confidence that He indeed is with us and keeping us wherever we go.
 - d. Jacob had an idea of how his relationship to God would work, but it is still pretty unbelieving. The stone was almost certainly wrong to do, as God later identifies "sacred" (not to be confused with "memorial") pillars as idolatry. God never acknowledges Bethel as His house, and it becomes a future seat of great idolatry. The vow even seems to test God, not going into effect until Jacob sees if God has kept His Word. But God's Word is as good as kept even in the moment that it is spoken.
 - e. Scripture calls Jesus "Immanuel" ("God with us"), and we have the advantage over Jacob to have an almost completely fulfilled Bible, but even more than that, union with Christ and the indwelling of His Spirit. Indeed, God will not have finished the "until I have done what I have spoken to you" of v15, until the last day, when ALL of God's promises have been kept in Christ.

Conclusion

God reveals Himself to believers in Jesus and is with believers in Jesus.